H konceptu medialnosti, tretjič (predgovor)

Urška Perenič

Del literarne vede že vsaj trideset let presega zgolj literarno besedilo kot ekskluzivni predmet preučevanja, se obrača k literarnemu sistemu kot celoti in se pri tem intenzivneje dotika tudi vprašanja *medija*. Ponuja različne teoretsko-kritične premisleke in metodološke rešitve, kako medije ustrezno vključiti v literarnovedno obravnavo. Pomembne zasluge za gojenje te metodološko-teoretske tradicije ima empirična literarna znanost, ki je v perspektivi zgodovinskega razvoja medijev med drugim opozorila tako na prenose literature, tradicionalno založene v tiskani izdaji, v mlajše (elektronske) medije (intermedialni pristopi) kakor na nastanek novih literarnoumetniških zvrsti in žanrov, ki so povezani prav z uporabo različnih medijskih tehnologij in praks (zvrstno-vrstni pristopi).

Oblikovale so se različne teoretske razlage *medialnosti.* Po eni strani se medialnost nanaša na tri oz. štiri osrednje vrste posredovanosti, ki so ustnost, pisnost, avdiovizualnost, pogojno še teatralnost (npr. Fischer Lichte), po drugi strani pa pomeni nabor lastnosti, ki opredeljujejo »bistvo« vsakega posameznega medija (npr. medialnost filma, radia, knjigotiska, govora). Te definicije praviloma pokrivajo dvoje lastnosti medija: njegove izrazno-estetske (»retorične«) potenciale, ki so v odvisnosti od konkretnih tehnologij (npr. govor, tisk, radio, televizija) in s katerimi medij dejansko sporoča samega sebe, ter učinke, ki jih imajo medijsko posredovana (literarna) sporočila na ravneh človekovega zaznavanja, spoznavanja, mišljenja, spominjanja in ne nazadnje komuniciranja. Medialnost je potemtakem razumljena kot estetski, kognitivni in socialni pojav. Koncept medialnosti je bil natančno opredeljen tudi z ozirom na kulturno-zgodovinski razvoj medijskih tehnologij (npr. Flusser, Goody, Kittler, McLuhan, Ong), ki gre od (naravnih) jezikov prek dolgo trajajoče dobe ustne kulture, kjer je osrednji medij govor in ki je praktično vselej sobivala z (roko)pisno in še mlajšo tiskano kulturo (npr. Hagland), do avdio-vizualnih in najmlajših digitalnih tehničnih medijev, ki spet na poseben način revitalizirajo ustnost. Metodično in teoretsko različnim pristopom je skupna kritična drža do vedno novih medijskih tehnologij in učinkov, ki jih imajo te na individualni in družbeni ravni. Vsi misleci se načelno strinjajo okrog tega, da noben

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medij ni samo (golo) tehnično sredstvo, temveč vselej kulturna stopnja v razvoju komunikacije. To na kratko pomeni, da mediji bistveno določajo tako vsebinsko-oblikovne vidike komuniciranja kakor komunikacijske prakse proizvajanja, predstavljanja, razširjanja, sprejemanja in obdelovanja sporočil.

Zaradi táke širine predmeta obravnave, ki torej presega besedilne okvire, je empirična literarna znanost vselej slonela na izmenjavi (spo)znanj iz bližnjih ali bolj oddaljenih znanstvenih disciplin, kakor so komunikacijska in medijska znanost, sociologija oz. socialne znanosti, psihologija, (nevro)biologija, kognitivne znanosti, in se v stiku z njimi napajala z različno produktivnimi pojmi, koncepti, têrmini in (hipo)tezami. Ena od takih tez in že nekakšnih maksím je izpod peresa kanadskega medijskega teoretika Marshalla McLuhana in se glasi: »Medij je sporočilo.« Pred dobrimi petdesetimi leti jo je zapisal v skorajda istoimenski knjigi *The Medium is the Massage* (1964). Skorajda zato, ker je pri postavljanju besedila knjige v naslovu prišlo do napake – *Massage* namesto *Message* –, ki pa je avtor ni želel odpraviti in se je izkazala za silno produktivno in poanti izjave precej ustrezno. Seveda mislimo na dobro poantirano zamisel o zmožnosti medija kot komunikacijskega kanala, da s svojimi tehnološkimi specifikami »masira«, tj. »mehanično« deluje na vsebinske in oblikovne vidike tistega, kar se v njem sporoča. Moramo pa isto izjavo razumeti tudi na ozadju zgodovinskega razvoja medijev, ki gre od netehničnih, človeških do tehničnih medijev, in še pomeni, da so starejši mediji praviloma vsebina novejših medijev – vsebina govora je miselni proces, vsebina pisave je govorjeni jezik, zapisana beseda je vsebina knjigotiska, vsebina oz. podlaga filma je knjiga itd.

Kako populiaren in vpliven je McLuhan še danes, navsezadnje potrjuje dejstvo, da na njegovih stališčih gradijo mnogi mlajši teoretiki ali si ga jemljejo za navdih, čeprav se z njim nujno in v celoti ne strinjajo. Eden izmed njih je medijski strokovnjak z milanske univerze Alberto Contri. 18. aprila 2017 je Marinella Testori s Kraljevega kolidža v Londonu na diskusijskem forumu Humanist v sporočilu »Beyond McLuhan? [Onkraj McLuhana?]« opozorila na Contrijevo svežo monografijo z naslovom *McLuhan non abita più qui: I nuovi scenari della comunicazione nell'era della costante attenzione parziale* [McLuhan ne živi več tu: Novi komunikacijski scenariji v dobi konstantne delne pozornosti] (Bollati Boringhieri, zbirka Saggi: Scienze sociali). Avtor je v njej famozno McLuhanovo »geslo« »medij je sporočilo« zaobrnil v »ljudje so sporočilo« in s tem spremenil njegovo poanto. Contri namreč pravi, da je McLuhan to geslo izrekel v zlati dobi televizije, za katero je značilen način komunikacije »od enega k vsem«, in zdaj ne

drži več. Sam ga nasprotno izreka oz. prenavlja v zlati dobi spletne interaktivnosti, za katero je značilna komunikacija »vsi vsem« (danes npr. spletni uporabniki lahko komunicirajo z izdajatelji televizijskih programov), zaradi česar je v geslu medijskotehnološko perspektivo zamenjal z bolj antropološko konstanto – ljudmi kot subjekti komunikacijskega univerzuma. Vendar tehnološki moment v komunikaciji s tem nikakor ni ukinjen. Ljudje s(m)o v spletnih načinih komunikacije še naprej in neobhodno »determinirani« z zakonitostmi medija, v katerem komuniciramo. Internet določa dinamiko komunikacije, kjer vsak lahko komunicira z vsakomer, pri čemer je ta dinamika izjemno intenzivna. – Morda bi jo lahko primerjali z jedrsko reakcijo v zelo vroči snovi, pri kateri se sprošča ogromna (komunikacijska) energija, ali plazovito ionizacijo, ko elektron v električnem polju sproži plaz novih in novih elektronov, ki spet izbijejo nove elektrone; nekako tako, kakor vsaka internetna objava izbije novo objavo, itn. – Contri navaja, kako smo v manj kot petdesetih letih s tako rekoč nekaj radijskih in televizijskih programov prišli do milijard spletnih strani. Obenem kritično opozarja na tveganja, ki jih prinašajo digitalni mediji; med njimi je razširjenost konstantne delne pozornosti, kar je že patološki vedênjski učinek, povezan s stalno preobremenitvijo naših možganov, ker smo v (hiper)virtualnem svetu spletne komunikacije na nestrukturiran način »bombardirani« z najrazličnejšimi sporočili (od oglasov, reklam prek e-pošte do newsletterjev, anket) in zato prisiljeni v večopravilnost.

Če prav razumemo Contrijeve premisleke in izvajanja v knjigi, potem je treba izraz »ljudje« v njegovi izjavi napolniti z dvema pomenoma – producenti na eni in recipienti na drugi strani komunikacijske verige, saj v spletni komunikaciji sočasno prevzemamo vlogo avtorjev in bralcev. Izjava »ljudje so sporočilo« bi se zato lahko glasila tudi »sporočilo so kreativni uporabniki«, s čimer bi pokrili dejavnosti pisanja oz. odzivanja in sprejemanja spletno posredovanih sporočil.

Tematski sklop, ki ga sestavlja sedem razprav, prav tako pokriva različne vidike (literarne) komunikacije – tehnološke, producentske, posredniške in sprejemniške. Sklop odpira razprava Andreja Koširja s Fakultete za elektrotehniko UL. V njej kritično zagovarja stališče, da so tehnologije v (pre)veliki meri vplivale zlasti na elektronske medije, čeprav so mediji kompleksen in, zdi se, v največji meri sociološki pojav. Njegov sklep je, da so akterji v medijskem komunikacijskem prostoru tisti, ki bi morali v največji meri oblikovati funkcionalne zahteve za medijske tehnologije. V svoji kompleksnosti je koncept medija predstavljen v zanimivi in pregledni razpravi Dejana Kosa (Filozofska fakulteta UM). Avtor se sprehodi skozi glavne medijskotehnološke in kulturne

stopnje v razvoju komunikacije, ki so pisava, tisk in avdiovizualni mediji, in medij konceptualno razplasti na več ravni – strukturno raven, raven simbolnih redov in (literarno)estetskih konvencij. Tehniško in teoretsko zasnovanima prispevkoma, ki pomagata skupaj celostneje umestiti v samo jedro problematike, sledi razprava Matije Ogrina (ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana), ki nas nekoliko zadrži na meji med rokopisno in tiskano pisnostjo v baročni dobi 17. in 18. stoletja. Potrdi se, da so na podoben način kakor ustne in pisne sobivale tudi rokopisne in tiskane tradicije. To je v skladu s še eno od McLuhanovih tez, da na novo porajajoče se oblike medialnosti nikakor ne pomenijo zatona starejših oblik medialnosti in starejših medijev. V dobo ne več Gutenbergove galaksije se povsem preselimo skozi razpravo Mirana Hladnika (Filozofska fakulteta UL), ki na podlagi bogatih izkušenj na področju digitalne humanistike poskuša predvsem odgovoriti na vprašanji, kako spletni medij oblikuje samo besedilo oz. sporočilo in kako se s »selitvijo« iz bolj tradicionalnih medijev na splet spreminja koncept avtorstva. Razprava Janeza Strehovca z Inštituta za nove medije in elektronsko literaturo (Ljubljana) nas zasidra v svet hipertekstne fikcije, med besedila, ki nove in drzne svetove odpirajo z uporabnikovim klikanjem na povezave in ki na presečišču s tehnološkimi dosežki in praksami eksperimentirajo z besedo in črko. Za obravnavo in interpretacijo del pisateljice in tudi medijske teoretičarke Kathrin Röggla uporabi izbrane ugotovitve in opazke Marshalla McLuhana v svoji razpravi Željko Uvanović z Vseučilišča v Osijeku. Navkljub razlikam si Röggla in McLuhan delita nekatera prepričanja, ko gre za vprašanje prihodnosti. Mislimo na McLuhanove antiutopične napovedi (npr. medijska igra vladajočih in potrošniških interesov). Tematski sklop zaokroža večavtorsko in interdisciplinarno zasnovana razprava Urške Perenič, Jurija Bona, Grege Repovša in Indre Pileckyte (Filozofska fakulteta UL in UKC Ljubljana). Avtorji skušajo s pomočjo eksperimenta in na primeru izbranih pesemskih besedil, ki spadajo v »dobo knjige« oz. (še vedno) Gutenbergove galaksije, preveriti eno od osrednjih medijskozgodovinskih tez, po kateri tehnološke inovacije s tem, ko transformirajo načine predstavljanja, posredovanja in sprejemanja, transformirajo tudi načine zaznavanja, spoznavanja, pomnjenja in razumevanja. Do vprašanja, ali je »boljši« klasični način branja s papirja ali zaslonski način branja, se avtorji ne opredeljujejo, čeprav rezultati pilotne raziskave kažejo, da med njima ni statistično relevantnih razlik. Na podlagi kognitivnega pristopa, ki si za izhodišče jemlje bralca/sprejemnika, bi na ozadju te razprave McLuhanovo (hipo) tezo morda lahko zaobrnili še v »bralec je sporočilo«.

On the Concept of Mediality, Thirdly (an Introduction)

Urška Perenič

For my B.

For at least thirty years a part of literary studies has reached beyond the literary text as the exclusive object of research, and turned instead to the literary system as a whole, intensively considering the question of *medium*. This part of the field offers different theoretical and critical reflections and methodological solutions for how adequately to integrate media into literary discussions. Chief credit for fostering this methodological and theoretical tradition might belong to empirical literary studies, which from the perspective of media's historical development, among others, have called attention to the transfer of literature, traditionally published in print form, to younger (electronic) media (intermedial approaches), and to the formation of new literary-artistic types and genres, which are connected with the use of different media technologies and practices (typologically-genre approach).

Different theoretical explanations of *mediality* took shape. On the one hand, mediality refers to three or four central means of conveying messages—i.e., verbality, writing, audio visualisation and, conditionally, theatricality (e. g., Fischer Lichte); on the other hand, mediality means a collection of characteristics that define the "essence" of each individual medium (e. g., the mediality of film, radio, book printing, speech). As a rule, these definitions cover two characteristics of the media: its ("rhetorical") potential for aesthetic expression, which depends on concrete technologies (e. g., speech, print, radio, television) by means of which media actually communicate themselves, and the effects that (literary) messages, communicated through the media, have on the levels of human cognition, comprehension, thinking, remembering and, last but not least, communication. Mediality is therefore understood as an aesthetic, cognitive and social phenomenon. The concept of mediality has also been precisely defined with respect to the historical development of media technologies in cultural contexts (e. g., Flusser, Goody, Kittler, McLuhan, Ong), from (natural) languages through a long period of oral culture, during which speech was the main medium and which has practically always coexisted with (hand) writing and even younger print culture (e. g., Hagland), to audio-visual

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and the youngest digital media, which, again, in a certain way revitalize verbality. The methodologically and theoretically different approaches have in common a critical stance towards continuously evolving media technologies and the effects they have on the individual and social levels. All thinkers in general agree that no medium is simply a technical instrument, but always a cultural stage in the development of communication. In brief, this means that media significantly define the content and formal aspects of communication, as well as the communications practices involved in producing, representing, distributing, receiving and processing messages.

Due to the breadth of the object of study, which goes beyond textual frameworks, empirical literary studies have always depended on the exchange of knowledge from proximate and more distant scientific disciplines, such as communications and media science, sociology or social sciences, psychology, (neuro)biology, and cognitive sciences, drawing on them for a variety of productive notions, concepts, technical terms and (hypo)theses. One of these theses and also a sort of maxim comes from the Canadian media theoretician Marshall McLuhan: "The medium is the message." He wrote it over fifty years ago in the almost eponymous book *The Medium is the Massage* (1964). Almost, because there had been a typesetting mistake – *Massage* instead of *Message* –, however, the author chose not to correct it, and it proved to be stylistically productive and relatively to the point. Of course, we have in mind the oft highlighted idea about media's capacity as a channel of communication, the technological characteristics of which "massage"—i.e., "mechanically" affect—the content and formal aspects of that which it communicates. However, we have to understand the statement on the background of the historical development of media, which proceeds from non-technical, human, to technical media. This does not necessarily mean that older media make up, as a rule, the content of newer media – the content of speech is a thought process, the content of writing is a spoken language, the written word is a content of book printing, the content or the foundation for film is a book, etc.

McLuhan's popularity today is, after all, seen in the fact that many younger theoreticians build on his viewpoints or consider him an inspiration, even if they do not (completely) agree with him. One such theoretician is the University of Milan media expert Alberto Contri. On 18 April 2017, Marinella Testori of King's College London referred (in the discussion forum Humanist, in the message "Beyond McLuhan?") to Contri's recent monograph entitled *McLuhan non abita più qui: I nuovi scenari della comunicazione nell'era della costante attenzione par-*

ziale [McLuhan does not live here anymore: A new communications scenario in the era of constant partial attention] (Bollati Boringhieri, collection Saggi: Scienze sociali). In it, the author reversed McLuhan's famous "slogan," "the medium is the message," saying, "people are the message," thus changing its point. That is to say, Alberto Contri holds that McLuhan invented his slogan in the golden age of television, for which communication "from one to all" was—but is no longer—characteristic. On the contrary, Alberto Contri pronounces this slogan, or renews it, in the golden age of internet interactivity, which is characterised by "everybody to all" communication (e. g., today internet users are able to communicate with the publishers of the television channels), and therefore he modified the media-technological perspective in the slogan according to the more anthropological constant – people as the subjects of the communications universe. However, with that the technological momentum in communication is by no means abolished. In employing different means of communication, people are still and unavoidably "determined" by the laws of the medium in which they communicate. The internet determines the dynamic of communication, where each is able to communicate with everybody, and this dynamic is enormous. Maybe we could compare it to a nuclear reaction in a very hot substance, where enormous (communications) energy is released, or with an avalanche ionisation, when an electron in the electrical field triggers an avalanche of more and more electrons, which, again, knock out other electrons. This is similar to when each new internet publication knocks out another. Contri says that in less than fifty years we have come from basically only few radio and television channels to a billion websites. At the same time, he draws critical attention to the risks that arise with digital media – among them the growth of constant partial attention, which is actually a pathological behavioural effect connected to constant brain overload, since in the (hyper)virtual world of internet communication we are, in a non-structured way, "bombarded" with different messages (from advertisements and advertising e-mail to newsletters and surveys), and therefore forced into multitasking.

If we understand Contri's considerations in the book correctly, then we have to attribute two meanings to the term "people" in his statement – producers and recipients in the communication chain, since in internet communication we simultaneously take over the roles of both author and reader. The statement "people are the message" could therefore also be read as "creative users are the message," which would cover the activities of writing or reacting and receiving messages mediated through the internet.

This thematic series, which consists of seven discussions, also covers different viewpoints of (literary) communications – technological, production, distribution and receiving. The series opens with a discussion by Andrej Košir (Faculty of Electrical Engineering, University of Ljubljana). In it, he critically defends the viewpoint that the technologies have to a (too) great extent influenced foremost electronic media, even though these media are a complex and, it seems, for the most part sociological notion. His conclusion is that agents in the media communications space are the ones who should, to a great extent, formulate functional demands for media technologies. Dejan Kos (Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor) presents an interesting and clear discussion of the concept of the medium in all its complexity. The author walks through the main media-technological and cultural levels in the development of communications—i.e., writing, print and audio-visual media. He conceptually layers the media into several levels – the structural level, the level of the symbolic order and that of (literary)aesthetic conventions. These technically and theoretically based articles, which fully introduce fundamental issues, are followed by Matija Ogrin's discussion (The Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Ljubljana), which causes us to pause on the border between handwritten and printed writing in the Baroque period of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and ascertains that handwritten and print traditions coexisted in the same ways as did oral and written ones. This is in accordance with another one of McLuhan's theses, that newly risen forms of mediality do not in any way represent a downfall of older forms of mediality and older media. We move completely to the era of the no-more-Gutenberg galaxy with Miran Hladnik's (Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana) discussion, based on his rich experience in the field of digital humanities, which tries, foremost, to answer the question of how the internet medium forms the text or the message and how the concept of authorship is changed by "migration" from more traditional media to the internet. Janez Strehovec's (Institute of New Media and Electronic Literature, Ljubljana) contribution introduces us to the world of hypertext fiction, where texts open new and bold worlds with the simple click of a link, and which experiments with word and letter at the intersection of technological achievements and practices. In his discussion and interpretation of works by the writer and media theoretician Kathrin Röggla, Željko Uvanović (University of Osijek) uses selected findings and remarks by Marshall McLuhan. Despite several differences, Röggla and McLuhan share some beliefs when it comes to the question of the future. Here we have in mind McLuhan's

dystopian announcements (e. g., the media game of the governing and consumerists' interest). The thematic series is rounded up by a multi-author, interdisciplinary discussion by Urška Perenič, Jurij Bon, Grega Repovš and Indre Pileckyte (Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana and University Medical Centre, Ljubljana). With the help of an experiment and the examples of selected poems that fall into the "period of the book" or (still) Gutenberg galaxy, the authors try to authenticate one of the main media-historical theses, saying that when technological innovations transform the means of representation, distribution and reception, they also transform the means of perception, cognition, remembering and comprehension. Authors are biased towards the question of which is "better" – classical reading from paper or reading on screen, even though the results of the pilot research show that there are no statistically relevant differences between the two. Based on a cognitive approach, which originates with the reader/receiver, we might, on the basis of this discussion, change McLuhan's (hypo)thesis to "the reader is the message".